



The Old Ironsides Report

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Paving the Roads of Baghdad with More Than Good Intentions

**Story and Photo by Sgt. Mark S. Rickert
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BAGHDAD, Iraq – Since the war ended, coalition forces have paved the roads of Baghdad with good intentions. But the time for metaphors has passed, and now it's time to pave the streets with pavement.

The 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, an Army Reserve unit based in Riverdale, Md., and part of Task Force 1st Armored Division, assessed various road construction sites in Baghdad, Sept. 7, as they moved into the second phase of their road maintenance program.

The 354th kicked off the road maintenance program during April, after finding the streets of Baghdad in poor conditions. During the first phase of the project, the 354th chose six major roads within the city to improve. During the first phase, the Iraqi construction crews widened the streets, built center medians, posted signs, and fixed streetlights.

"Today, we're seeing the final steps of phase one," said Lt. Col. Joseph Wunderlich, transportation officer for the public facilities team, 354th Civil Affairs Brigade. "After they prepare the roads, they will begin with the next phase."

Phase two of the road maintenance program entails a more detailed approach, such as resurfacing the roads, ensuring guard rails are placed along critical points, as well as ensuring proper signage is placed throughout the city.

"This will be longest phase of the project," said Wunderlich. "We are catching up with the lack of maintenance that occurred during many years of the previous regime."

Mujahid Shariff, the director general for projects for the city of Baghdad, has worked with the civil affairs team to repair problems along the metropolitan streets. According to Shariff, the 354th has offered tremendous help.

"The coalition forces have helped from the beginning," said Shariff. "We've become a team. They've gone through each step with us, helping us with finances, budgeting and planning."

Shariff says that fixing the roads in Baghdad will play an important role in the progress of Baghdad. By repairing the streets, the citizens see Baghdad moving forward.

"People feel it's a duty to fix water and sewer pipes," said Shariff. "When the water lines or the sewer lines fracture, you must fix it. But when people see that we are building better roads, they feel like Baghdad is progressing."



An Iraqi worker helps build a median along a major road in Baghdad as part of the road maintenance program, started by the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, an Army Reserve unit based in Riverdale, Md. The 354th is part of Task Force 1st Armored Division.

A Smart Tip From 1AD Safety

Ground guides will be used when–

- ✓ Rear visibility limited or is blocked by cargo
- ✓ Moving through assembly areas, motor pools, LSAs

Ground Guide Requirements–

- ✓ One ground guide is required for ≤ 1 1/4-ton
- ✓ Two ground guides are required > 1 1/4-ton
- ✓ Two ground guides are required for Tracks

Ground Guides will–

- ✓ Not walk backwards
- ✓ Not position themselves between vehicles
- ✓ Use reflective vests/belts and flashlights when visibility is reduced
- ✓ Forward ground guide will be 10 feet in front of vehicle

NEWS

Arafat Defiant Over Calls for Expulsion

JERUSALEM (AP) - Israel said Yasser Arafat will be removed because he "is a complete obstacle" to peace, but put off immediate action Thursday on expelling the 74-year-old Palestinian leader. "No one can kick me out," Arafat said at his West Bank compound. Asked if he would leave of his own accord, he said, "definitely not."

Panel Hears Case on Halting Calif. Recall

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) - A three-member federal appeals court panel, clearly troubled by the prospect that some 40,000 voters might be disenfranchised by the use of punch-card ballots in the recall election, challenged lawyers Thursday to explain why the election should be allowed. The legal challenge echoes problems with "hanging chads" in Florida during the 2000 presidential election. It appears to be the last major legal challenge that could halt the Oct. 7 election on whether California Gov. Gray Davis should be recalled.

Microsoft Admits New Windows Problem

WASHINGTON (AP) - Moments before a top Microsoft executive told Congress about efforts to improve security, the company warned on Wednesday of new flaws that leave its flagship Windows software vulnerable to Internet attacks similar to the Blaster virus that infected hundreds of millions of computers last month. Microsoft urged customers to immediately apply a free repairing patch from its Web site, www.microsoft.com

CIA Confirms Audio of Bin Laden Deputy

WASHINGTON (AP) - The CIA has authenticated a section of the audio on the new al-Qaida videotape as an actual recording of Osama bin Laden's chief deputy, but analysts are unsure whether the voice purported to be bin Laden himself is truly him, a CIA official said Thursday. The videotape, aired Wednesday on the Arab al-Jazeera television network, has two voiceovers, one purportedly from bin Laden, and the other from his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri. A CIA official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said agency analysts have determined that al-Zawahri's voice is authentic.

Chaplain's thought for the day: ***The Antidote for Pessimism***

The Lord will give what is good. -- Psalm 85:12

Just as the sun can be blotted out by an eclipse, so moods of pessimism and doubt can plunge us into spiritual darkness. At times our situation may seem so desperate that we think even God Almighty can't carry us through. That was the gloomy attitude of Robert Cushman, who recorded his despair on the Mayflower in 1620. He wrote, "If we ever make a plantation in New England, God works a miracle! Especially considering how scant we shall be of victuals [vittles], and (worst of all) ununited amongst ourselves. If I should write you of all the things that foretell our ruin, I should overcharge my weak head and grieve your tender heart. Only this I pray you. Prepare for evil tidings of us every day. I see not in reason how we can escape. Pray for us instantly." In spite of Cushman's fears, God brought the pilgrims to their destination and enabled them to establish a home in the wilderness. Let's not doubt God's all-sufficient help.

He will carry us through life's darkest hours.

SPORTS

Rangers Right Wing Bure Out Indefinitely

NEW YORK (AP) - Right wing Pavel Bure's damaged right knee failed a team physical Thursday, and the New York Rangers declared him medically unable to play. Bure will not accompany the team to Burlington, Vt., for training camp, which begins Friday. The team said there is no timetable for when he can play again.

Oddly Enough...

Stowaway Packs Self in Crate for Flight

DALLAS (AP) -- A shipping clerk who flew from the New York area to Dallas in an air cargo crate now says it was "the craziest thing I could ever do within my life." Charles D. McKinley, 25, was arrested and jailed on unrelated bad-check and traffic charges after his odyssey last weekend. Federal officials are considering additional charges of stowing away on a plane. He startled his parents - and a deliveryman - when he broke out of the box outside their home Saturday. "My husband asked him, 'Man, what are you doing in this crate?' He said he was coming home," McKinley's mother told KDFW-TV in Dallas. Before setting out, McKinley filled out shipping instructions saying the crate held a computer and clothes. Authorities believe he had help from at least one co-worker at the warehouse where he works in New York when he loaded himself in the box. The box was trucked from New York's Kennedy Airport to Newark, N.J., where it was loaded onto a plane operated by Kitty Hawk Cargo. The plane stopped in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and the carrier's hub in Fort Wayne, Ind., before going to Dallas, the FBI said. A driver for Pilot Air Freight saw a pair of eyes in the crate when he went to unload it outside McKinley's parents' home in DeSoto, a Dallas suburb. He thought it was a body, but McKinley broke the box open and crawled out, said police Lt. Brian Windham. The crate was carried in a pressurized, heated area, but could just as easily have been placed in the lower, un-pressurized holds, said Richard G. Phillips, chief executive of Pilot Air Freight. "He could easily have died," Phillips said. The freight cost - billed to McKinley's employer - was \$550. At that rate, "he could have flown first-class," Phillips said.

This Day in History ***September 12th 1977***

Steven Biko, leader of South Africa's "Black Consciousness Movement," dies of severe head trauma on the stone floor of a prison cell in Pretoria. Six days earlier, he had suffered a major blow to his skull during a police interrogation in Port Elizabeth. Instead of receiving medical attention, he was chained spread-eagled to a window grill for 24 hours. On September 11, he was dumped, naked and shackled, on the floor of a police vehicle and driven 740 miles to Pretoria Central Prison. He died the next day. In announcing his death, South African authorities claimed Biko died after refusing food and water for a week in a hunger strike. Apartheid was abolished in South Africa in 1991, and in 1995 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to examine apartheid-era crimes. The TRC promised amnesty for those who came forward. In 1997 the five former security officers who interrogated Steven Biko applied for amnesty from the TRC. When the men testified before the TRC shortly before the 20th anniversary of Biko's death they claimed that Biko had injured himself in a scuffle. In February 1999, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission denied the men amnesty, saying that the former officers' version of Mr. Biko's death was "so improbable and contradictory that it has to be rejected as false."